

NSC BRIEFING

11 February 1954

**POPULAR REACTION IN EAST GERMANY  
TO THE FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE**

- I. According to US officials in Berlin, East German people were "unhappy but expectant" during first week of conference, "unhappy and disappointed" during second week, and expected to be "unhappy and angry" this week.
  - A. Discontent demonstrated by overt vocal expressions of opposition to the regime, announced intentions to strike, revolt or "march on Berlin."
    1. There is strong undercurrent of rebellion that is kept from erupting only by the threat of Soviet military reprisal.

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B. Soviet and East German authorities anticipated popular mood and took prior elaborate security precautions to prevent overt demonstrations.

1. Particular attention paid to  
• Berlin where Soviet garrison augmented by strong reinforcements.
2. In addition, police reinforcements provided.

II. Anti-regime attitude caused by Soviet political and economic policy in Germany.

A. Basic popular demand since June riots has been for political reform.

1. No concessions to this demand.

B. Measures to improve the standard of living.

1. Included attempts to improve food and consumer-goods supply and increase variety of goods available.
2. East German populace will accept no appeasing measures as substitute for basic political reform.

III. If conference should fail, East Germans will probably feel they have lost last chance for salvation.

- A. Inclination to revolt will probably be very strong since it will be inflamed by desperation.
- B. However, Soviet military and coercive capabilities are such that no successful revolt could be launched without arms or assistance from outside sources.

- C. Improbable that East Germans will resort to popular uprisings.
- D. Increased flow of refugees to West can be expected.